

2003, became the latest in a growing list of retired military officers who harshly criticize the war in Iraq. He said that the United States is "living a nightmare with no end in sight." General Sanchez also lambasted the latest strategy in Iraq calling it, again, "a desperate attempt by the administration that has not accepted the political and economic realities of this war."

These startling revelations from the highest ranks of our military should shake us to our very core. The man who was personally responsible for conducting the war in Iraq is trying to convince us that we should have no faith in the administration now waging the war.

General Sanchez went on to say, "There has been a glaring unfortunate display of incompetent strategic leadership within our national leaders," and that "the American people must hold them accountable."

But, General Sanchez, how can the American people hold their elected officials accountable? As we all know, they can make a lot of noise by calling congressional offices, writing letters, and attending marches; but at the end of the day, the American people hold their elected officials accountable at the ballot box.

To my colleagues in the House of Representatives, our constituents have already made up their minds. An overwhelming majority of people think it was a mistake to invade Iraq and believe that setting a timetable for withdrawal is the correct course of action. Most Democrats and Republicans agree that an open-ended occupation of Iraq is an awful idea. But the Iraqi people don't want us there, and we have no timetable for withdrawal.

What do we have if not an open-ended occupation? What more do we need to learn before deciding that this war must be brought to a halt? Day after day, the grim realities unfolding in Iraq paint a picture of futility and mismanagement. More lives are lost, more money is squandered, and Iraq falls deeper and deeper into chaos and civil war.

President Bush has had our military in pursuit of a victory that is perpetually "just around the corner." Well, we have been around the corner and back again. There is no victory to be found. The time to end this debacle has long since passed. The United States military presence has reinforced in the minds of the Iraqis the most damaging lesson an emerging nation can learn: that problems are solved with bullets and bombs instead of compromise and cooperation. Instead of encouraging compromise and fostering cooperation among the various warring tribes, we have done the exact opposite. We continue to spend billions of dollars blindly arming Iraqis who volunteer to serve in the Iraqi security forces with no thought as to where their loyalties might lie when we hand them weapons.

On one hand, as Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and Inter-

national Studies points out, we have not addressed the degree to which all elements of the Iraqi security forces, from the Prime Minister's office down, have links to Shiite efforts to retain and expand power and carry out sectarian cleansing in mixed areas.

On the other hand, the bottom-up reconciliation that Bush brags about is arming and empowering the Sunni militias in Anbar province and elsewhere. This is, as a recent article in the Economist suggests, a recipe for civil war and only serves to undermine the central government of Iraq.

These irresponsible and dangerous tactics not only harm future prospects for stability in Iraq, but seriously erode our standing in the Middle East and larger international community.

I would like to commend General Sanchez for speaking out against the Bush administration. But how many more General Sanchezes will it take before the last Congressperson turns against the occupation of Iraq? How many more investigations of Blackwater's abuse, of Halliburton's fraud, how many more reports of our overstretched military at its breaking point, or about the damage our occupation is doing to our international standing? How much more of this debate do we need before our national leaders accept that the Iraq war is actually making our country less safe?

For the good of this great Nation and for the good of Iraq, it is time to bring our troops home and end the occupation of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I know that there is an attempt to put a good face on the surge and to try and make us believe that the surge is working, but just read your newspapers every day and see the number of lives that are being lost, not only of our own soldiers, but of the Iraqis.

CORPORAL DONALD E. VALENTINE III—U.S. ARMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "The soldier is the Army, and wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. While we mourn those men who die, we should thank God such men ever lived." These are the words of General George Patton in World War II.

Mr. Speaker, one of those soldiers was Corporal Donald E. Valentine III of the United States Army. He was born in Houston, Texas, on March 5, 1986. Donald Valentine joined the United States Army because of the 9/11 attack on this country.

His mother Anna said, "My husband and I were behind Donald 100 percent. I was so proud of him no matter what he ever did. He made me very proud to be his mother." Words from another of America's Gold Star Mothers.

I met Anna Valentine and many members of the Valentine family re-

cently at Veterans National Cemetery in Houston, where mothers like Anna who had children killed in Iraq and Afghanistan were being honored. We call those noble women Gold Star Mothers. Anna Valentine's son is buried on that hallowed ground of the fallen in Houston, Texas.

Corporal Valentine was killed along with two other soldiers on September 18 in Muqadadiyah, Iraq, when an IED, an improvised explosive device, detonated near him.

Mr. Speaker, you understand the use of an IED by America's enemy is a coward's way of fighting the war. These enemies rant and rave and preach hate in the name of religion, but they cover their faces with masks and hide in caves and dark, dusty ditches. They are afraid to come out in the open and face the American soldier, so our enemy detonates remote-controlled bombs.

Corporal Donald Valentine III comes from a military family. His father, Donald II, is a Navy veteran. His brother Daniel wanted to enlist to be with his brother Donald in Iraq, and Daniel, 19, still intends to join the military. Mr. Speaker, America owes much to families like the Valentines.

Donald was married 1 year to Lucia, who said Donald had all the qualities any girl would want. She had talked to Donald on their first anniversary, 3 days before his death in Iraq. Corporal Valentine told his family that, if he did not survive the war, they should stay strong. He is the 91st fallen servicemember with ties to the Houston area to have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Corporal Donald Valentine was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team from Fort Lewis, Washington.

Being from a military family, he moved around a lot as a child. He lived in Florida most of his life and in Idaho, but wanted to be buried in "Big H," as he called Houston, Texas, because of many reasons. One of those reasons was because he spent so much time growing up with his grandparents who live in Houston. Mr. Speaker, Donald's grandparents, Thomas and Lupe Cortez, and his other grandmother Geneva Fernandez, survive their grandson.

As a grandfather of five with two more grandkids on the way, I think it would be a most difficult task to bury a grandson in the vigor of their youth.

In the official statement on Donald's death, the family said, "Donald touched the lives of so many with his big heart. We will cherish the beautiful memories we shared with you. You made us so very proud. Now heaven has another hero. And, continue to watch over us as an angel in heaven."

On September 28, 2007, taps played for the last time as 21 guns saluted this American soldier. This is a photograph of Donald Valentine III.

A statement has been credited to one of Rome's centurions when he told his

troops, "How you yet live will echo throughout eternity." Corporal Valentine lived a short but faithful life to the things that were important to him: family and country. He was 21 when he was killed.

Mr. Speaker, General George Patton was right about such warriors. We should thank God that such men as Corporal Donald Valentine III died and lived.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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IN OPPOSITION TO RESOLUTION REGARDING ARMENIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I want to come to the floor of the House tonight and add my voice to a lot of my colleagues in opposition to the dangerous resolution condemning Turkey for reported atrocities against the Armenian people. Everyone regrets what happened at the end of the First World War; but, Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a very complicated war, a complicated war in which every ally is valuable to our war effort.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, this resolution has the potential to inflict damage on the United States-Turkish relationship such that it would be very difficult to repair it, and this should be at the forefront of our minds as we consider bringing to the floor for a vote.

I am concerned about this resolution, and I urge the Speaker not to allow these actions.

I am asking us to consider the long-lasting negative effects that this resolution could have on our foreign policy interests. The last thing we need is for an American ally to stray from the path of victory in Iraq, and with President Abdullah Gul threatening to withdraw Turkey's support of the Iraq war should we vote on and pass this risky resolution, this possibility unfortunately is moving ever closer to reality.

Mr. Speaker, Turkey continues to be a consistent U.S. partner in developing some of the crucial defense equipment we're going to need to protect our country into the future. Currently,

Turkey is aiding in the development of Lockheed Martin's F-35 Lightning fighter. I can testify to the significant importance of sustaining positive relations with Turkey, because the final assemblage of the aforementioned aircraft will, in fact, take place at Lockheed Martin's Ft. Worth plant which is very near my district in North Texas. These are important developments in the war on terror and now is not the time to compromise these efforts.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, this resolution, this resolution is ill timed and ill suited for a country at war. What will happen to the transport of goods, fuel, food, fiber through Turkey into northern Iraq?

And if those shipments, if those shipments of food, fuel and fiber are delayed or ended by the Turks, who wins and who loses?

Mr. Speaker, I will submit that the average American probably doesn't know the answer to that question. It's not that they're indifferent, but they just don't know if there's going to be a winner or a loser. The average Turk, while he may care, is really just pretty mad about it all.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would submit it is the Iraqi citizen who is on our side who will lose. They will be denied sustenance. They will be denied food for their family. They will be denied fuel to heat their homes in the coming winter in the northern part of Iraq, in a country that has been ravaged by war.

Well, if Iraqis who are friendly to us are likely to be hurt, what about the enemy in Iraq? Well, Mr. Speaker, they may be the indirect winner because after all, we know they love chaos; and anything that increases disorder in Iraq's fragile social system benefits our enemy.

Mr. Speaker, I am not connecting dots that have not already been connected. Right as we left before the August recess the majority whip was quoted as saying if things go well in Iraq, it's bad for us; it's bad for our majority party.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, then we've seen several times during the month of September where it does seem like sometimes they're invested in defeat.

But who really bears the brunt is the United States soldier. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not just a theoretical concern. October 2000, same bill, conflicts are a little bit different. Northern watch, keeping the Iraqis from attacking the Kurds. Those planes in northern Iraq to enforce the no-fly zone and keep Saddam from attacking the Kurds, those F-16s flew out of Turkey and they kept watch every day of every week during what we now know as Northern Watch. They kept the Iraqi Republican Guard in a box and kept them from attacking Kurds.

Mr. Speaker, I was not in Congress in October of 2000. But I will tell you that a young man who is now a constituent, actually stationed in Clovis, New Mexico, but was moved to Incirlik, Turkey, and was on duty then, he talked to

me back in October of 2000. He said, we were away from home in a place that really was awfully strange for a 21-year-old. And then we picked up our newspapers one morning and there's a big hole in the side of a United States ship, the USS *Cole* which was bombed in October of 2000. The tension was mounting daily. Other attacks were a possibility. And then all hell broke loose outside the base. There was protests, there was shouting, there were people yelling at us at the gate. None of us were allowed off the base. And why? Because the House of Representatives was going to take up the Armenian genocide resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this constituent was my son. He asked me then, Dad, why is Congress making things tougher for us over here? I didn't have an answer for him now and I don't have an answer for him now. President Clinton did not support this bill in 2000. Majority Leader Arney refused to allow it to come to the floor. Don't make life tougher for our soldiers. We're a country at war. Let's act like it for once.

PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days Congress will consider the Peru Free Trade Agreement. I rise tonight to ask why are we in such a rush to approve a flawed and misguided trade policy.

The Peru Free Trade Agreement doesn't enjoy the support of any of the constituencies which it's supposed to benefit. No labor unions vocally are out supporting this agreement. Why would they? The labor standards are unenforceable. It doesn't protect "buy America." It promotes off-shoring of our industries.

The Peru Free Trade Agreement is just like the NAFTA-CAFTA framework. NAFTA has cost Maine over 23 percent of our manufacturing base. The new labor environmental language will do nothing to improve the situation.

The Bush administration claims that the agreement will improve labor standards in Peru and, in the next breath, Tom Donahue, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce states that he is "encouraged by assurances that the labor provisions cannot be read to require compliance with the ILO conventions."

So why are we rushing to approve such a toothless measure?

Why is Congress moving so fast to approve a trade policy which has not been subject to a full hearing since the deal was announced? The last hearing on the Peru Free Trade Agreement in the Ways and Means Committee was held in 2006. There are no environmental groups that are rallying support for the unenforceable environmental protections. That includes the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth.